

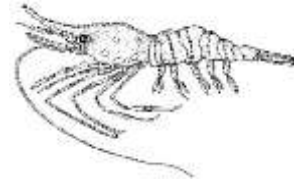
# **ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME**

## **DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES**

### **NEWS RELEASE**



*Cora Campbell, Commissioner*  
*Jeff Regnart, Director*



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#### **FISHERY UPDATE**

#### **PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND**

#### **COMMERCIAL SHRIMP POT FISHERY**

The 2012 Prince William Sound (PWS) commercial shrimp pot season opened April 15 with a guideline harvest level (GHL) of 51,240 lb and closed July 15, 2012. Approximately 20,615 lb was harvested from 112 landings by 33 vessels. Fishery performance in harvest Area 3 was poor relative to fishing during the recent two years in harvest Areas 1 and 2 with an overall fishery catch per unit of effort (CPUE) of 0.99 lb per pot (lb/pot).

The department has received requests to reconsider closure of the 2012 PWS commercial shrimp pot fishery. Prior to announcing the closure in a department news release (NR09-SF-E-12, EO#2-SF-E-05-12), area and regional department staff reviewed all available information. Data from the survey conducted in October 2011 at the three stations located in Area 3 indicated a potentially low fishery catch per unit effort (CPUE). However, given the large area of available shrimp habitat and the limited coverage of the survey, the department believed that effort by the commercial fleet could demonstrate greater shrimp abundance in Area 3. Logbook data show that the area has been thoroughly explored with an effort of approximately 20,791 pot lifts. All available data strongly suggest that shrimp abundance in Area 3 is low relative to Areas 1 and 2, and that continued commercial fishing to achieve the GHL of 51,240 lb within Area 3 during the 2012 season could jeopardize the health of the shrimp stock within that area. It is important to note that a GHL is a guideline, not a guaranteed harvest level, and may be adjusted inseason as necessary. After further consideration of all the relevant information concerning the condition of shrimp stocks in Area 3 in accordance with 5 AAC 31.035(d), and without compelling new information, it is the department's decision to retain the closure of the PWS commercial shrimp pot fishery for the 2012 season.

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